

July 5, 1982

US Embassy Pakistan Cable 10239 to State Department, 'My First Meeting with President Zia'

Citation:

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Summary:

A report to the State Department from Ambassador General Vernon Walters on his meeting with President Zia, where he confronted the Pakistani President with "incontrovertible evidence" that his country had "transferred designs and specifications for nuclear weapons components to purchasing agents in several countries for the purpose of having these nuclear weapons components fabricated for Pakistan" despite promises not to do so. Zia denied the charge, and Walter later commented, "either he really does not know or is the most superb and patriotic liar I have ever met."

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English

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5380

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 ISLAMABAD 10239

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR WALTERS

PASS TO S/AL

E.O. 12065: RDS-1, 3 7/5/02 (KING, B.) OR-M
TAGS: PEPR PINR MNUC, PK
SUBJECT: MY FIRST MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ZIA

1. (S) - ENTIRE TEXT. DEPARTMENT REPEAT LONDON TO HOLD FOR AMBASSADOR WALTERS FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH BRITISH.
2. SUMMARY: MEETING FIRST ALONE AND THEN WITH AIDES, I DESCRIBED TO ZIA OUR INFORMATION, THE PROBLEM IT CREATED FOR BOTH OUR COUNTRIES AND WHAT WAS NEEDED IF WE WERE TO SALVAGE OUR RELATIONSHIP. ZIA DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF SUCH PAKISTANI EFFORTS TO ACQUIRE COMPONENTS FOR A NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE DEVICE. HE REITERATED HIS ASSURANCE NOT TO EMBARRASS US, INDICATING THAT HE MEANT IT TO APPLY TO THE ENTIRE NUCLEAR ISSUE. HE ALSO ADDED A NEW ASSURANCE THAT PAKISTAN WAS NOT MANUFACTURING A DEVICE OF ANY KIND, PEACEFUL OR OTHERWISE. AFTER A LENGTHY EXCHANGE ON KANUPP SAFEGUARDS, HE SAID THERE WERE LIMITS TO HOW FAR PAKISTAN WOULD GO WITH THE IAEA, BUT THAT HE WOULD TRY TO KEEP THE BALL IN THE AGENCY'S COURT. THE EXCHANGE ENDED WITH ZIA INVITING US TO DINNER MONDAY NIGHT TO CONTINUE

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THE DISCUSSION. LATER I SAW FONMIN YAQUB ALONE. THAT CONVERSATION IS REPORTED BY SEPTTEL.

3. ON JULY 4, 1982, PRESIDENT ZIA UL HAQ RECEIVED ME AT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ARCHIE M BOLSTER
CLASSIFICATION: SECRET REASON: 25X1
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 5 JUL 2022
DATE/CASE ID: 02 NOV 2011 201100123

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HIS RESIDENCE IN RAWALPINDI. FOR THE FIRST PART OF OUR CONVERSATION WE WERE ALONE. LATER, CHARGE KING AND DR. GALLUCCI JOINED ME AND ZIA BROUGHT IN FOREIGN MINISTER YAQUB KHAN; FINANCE MINISTER GHULAM ISHAQ KHAN; MUNIR KHAN, CHAIRMAN, PAEC; GENERAL ARIF; AND NIAZ NAIK, FOREIGN SECRETARY.

4. DURING THAT PART OF THE CONVERSATION WHERE WE WERE ALONE I THANKED PRESIDENT ZIA FOR RECEIVING ME ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE AND HANDED HIM THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER. HE READ IT CAREFULLY AND EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR IT. I SAID THAT WHILE IN THE PAST I HAD BEEN GIVEN A NUMBER OF DIFFICULT MISSIONS THIS ONE WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT OF ALL. THE SUBJECT WAS INTELLIGENCE OF AN INCONTROVERTIBLE NATURE WE HAD RECEIVED THAT THE PAKISTANIS OR PEOPLE PURPORTING TO REPRESENT THEM HAD TRANSFERRED DESIGNS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR NUCLEAR WEAPON COMPONENTS TO PURCHASING AGENTS IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES FOR THE PURPOSE OF HAVING THESE NUCLEAR WEAPONS COMPONENTS FABRICATED FOR PAKISTAN. I DID NOT FEEL IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO DEBATE THIS EVIDENCE BUT I MUST TELL HIM THAT OUR LAW REQUIRES US, WHEN WE OBTAIN SUCH INFORMATION, TO NOTIFY THE CONGRESS. I WOULD LEAVE A COPY OF THAT LAW WITH HIM.

5. I WISHED FIRST TO APPRISE HIM OF THE SUBJECT WHICH I HAD COME TO DISCUSS SO THAT HE COULD DECIDE WHETHER TO PURSUE IT ALONE WITH ME OR WHETHER HE WANTED TO HAVE SOME OF HIS ADVISORS IN. IF THE LATTER WERE THE CASE, I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE CHARGE KING AND DR. GALLUCCI JOIN ME.

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HE SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR WHAT I HAD TO SAY AND WOULD THEN LIKE TO HAVE HIS ADVISORS COME IN.

6. I SAID THAT AS A SOLDIER I KNEW HOW DIFFICULT WHAT I WAS ASKING WOULD BE. I KNEW THE MATHEMATICS AND THE DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES. I THEN CAREFULLY WENT THROUGH THE TALKING POINTS I HAD BROUGHT FROM WASHINGTON. WHEN I CONCLUDED, HE SAID THAT PAKISTAN DID NOT HAVE A WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. HE DID NOT DOUBT THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN HAD EVIDENCE HE CONSIDERED INCONTROVERTIBLE, BUT HE COULD REPEAT TO ME THE ASSURANCES THAT HE HAD PREVIOUSLY GIVEN TO UNDERSECRETARY BUCKLEY. HE WOULD NOT DEVELOP A NUCLEAR WEAPON AND WOULD NOT EXPLODE A NUCLEAR DEVICE. I SAID THAT AS FAR AS THE IMPACT ON CONGRESS WAS CONCERNED, THERE WAS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A NUCLEAR

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EXPLOSIVE AND A NUCLEAR WEAPON PROGRAM WOULD DESTROY ANY CHANCE OF OUR OBTAINING CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL FOR OUR LARGE MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR PAKISTAN.

7. I KNEW OF THE COOPERATION PAKISTAN WAS GIVING US IN CERTAIN AREAS. WE WANTED TO GO AHEAD WITH THE AID PROGRAM BECAUSE WE WERE CONVINCED OF THE IMPORTANCE OF A STRONG, STABLE, FRIENDLY, AND PROSPEROUS PAKISTAN. MRS. GANDHI WAS COMING TO WASHINGTON SOON AND HE COULD BE SURE THAT WE WOULD MAKE UNMISTAKABLY CLEAR TO HER OUR VIEWS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PAKISTAN. HE SAID THAT HE FELT IT WOULD BE EXTRAORDINARILY HELPFUL IF WE WOULD DO THIS.

8. PRESIDENT ZIA THEN SAID THAT HE COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT THESE DESIGNS COULD HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED TO FOREIGN PURCHASING OR MANUFACTURING AGENTS WITHOUT HIS KNOWING IT AND HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY SUCH WEAPONS DEVELOP-

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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 04 ISLAMABAD 10239

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR WAINWRIGHT UNCLASSIFIED

PASS TO S/AL

E.O. 12065: RDS-1, 3 7/5/02 (KING, B.) OR-M
TAGS: PEPR PINR MNUC, PK
SUBJECT: MY FIRST MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ZIA

MENT PROGRAMS. PAKISTAN MIGHT NOT BE A LARGE OR IMPORTANT COUNTRY BUT IT WAS AN HONORABLE ONE AND HE COULD GIVE HIS WORD OF HONOR AS A SOLDIER THAT THEY WOULD NOT DEVELOP, MUCH LESS EXPLODE, A NUCLEAR WEAPON OR EXPLOSIVE DEVICE.

9. I THEN MADE CLEAR THAT WE WERE NOT IN ANY WAY ASKING PAKISTAN TO GIVE UP ITS NUCLEAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. WE WERE CONCERNED ONLY WITH WEAPONS OR EXPLOSIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. LIKEWISE, UNSAFEGUARDED REPROCESSING WAS OF SERIOUS CONCERN TO US. I THEN GAVE HIM THE LIST (FROM THE BRIEFING BOOK) OF THE THINGS WE WERE NOT REPEAT NOT ASKING PAKISTAN TO GIVE UP. I ALSO HANDED HIM A NON PAPER SUMMARIZING THE TALKING POINTS I USED IN SPEAKING TO HIM. I TOLD HIM THAT IT WAS CONCEIVABLE THAT SOME ZEALOUS SUBORDINATES MIGHT HAVE SENT THESE DESIGNS ABROAD WITHOUT HIS AUTHORITY. HE SAID THAT HE WAS SURE IT HAD NOT HAPPENED BUT HE WOULD

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CLARIFY THIS MATTER WITH HIS SUBORDINATES. (COMMENT: EITHER HE REALLY DOES NOT KNOW OR HE IS THE MOST SUPERB AND PATRIOTIC LIAR I HAVE EVER MET.)

10. AT THIS POINT THE ADDITIONAL MEMBERS, BOTH U.S. AND PAKISTANI, JOINED US AND THE DISCUSSION CONTINUED. ONCE AGAIN I WENT OVER THE TALKING POINTS AND PRESIDENT ZIA REPEATED IN THEIR PRESENCE WHAT HE HAD ALREADY TOLD ME.

11. PRESIDENT ZIA THEN ASKED MUNIR KHAN TO SPEAK TO THE KANUPP SAFEGUARDS ISSUE. KHAN BEGAN BY OBSERVING THAT IN APRIL OF LAST YEAR THE AGENCY HAD ASKED PAKISTAN TO DO CERTAIN THINGS AT KANUPP AND THAT BY JANUARY OF THIS YEAR ESSENTIALLY ALL ISSUES WERE RESOLVED. HE SAID THAT IN FEBRUARY IAEA DIRECTOR GENERAL BLIX THEREFORE GAVE PAKISTAN A GOOD REPORT, BUT IN JUNE SOMEHOW PAKISTAN HAD BEEN CHARACTERIZED AS UNCOOPERATIVE. KHAN EXPLAINED THIS CHANGE AS THE RESULT OF PRESSURE BEING APPLIED TO

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THE AGENCY TO "TWIST PAKISTAN." HE SAID UNCLASSIFIED
COUNTRIES, FOR UNKNOWN REASONS, WERE PUSHING Blix to
CORNER AND HARASS PAKISTAN AND KEEP PAKISTAN "UP IN THE
AIR."

[REDACTED]

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KHAN

WENT ON, SAYING THAT NOT A SINGLE FUEL ELEMENT HAD
TURNED UP MISSING AFTER A THOROUGH INVENTORY, AND THAT
IT WOULD TAKE SOME 250 ELEMENTS TO FABRICATE EVEN A
SINGLE NUCLEAR DEVICE.

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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12. GALLUCCI RESPONDED BY SAYING HE DID NOT THINK IT
WOULD BE USEFUL TO GO INTO THE DETAILS OF WHAT THE AGENCY
HAD ASKED FOR OR THE MERITS OF THE PAKISTANI RESPONSE.
HE SAID THAT IN THE FIRST INSTANCE IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT
PAKISTAN AGREE TO DO THAT WHICH THE AGENCY DETERMINED AS
NECESSARY TO PERMIT IT TO SAFEGUARD KANUPP. THIS ISSUE
HAD BECOME A POLITICAL MATTER THAT AFFECTED THE INTERESTS
OF PAKISTAN AND THE UNITED STATES IN ADDITION TO THE WELL
BEING OF THE IAEA. HE NOTED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD
CHARACTERIZED THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND THE
IAEA AS A SERIOUS, GOOD-FAITH ATTEMPT OF THE PARTIES TO
REACH AN AGREEMENT ON SAFEGUARDS MEASURES WHEN IT
ARGUED FOR THE WAIVER OF THE SYMINGTON AMENDMENT AND THE
FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR PAKISTAN LAST YEAR. HE
SAID THAT CONGRESS WOULD CERTAINLY BE VERY CONCERNED IF
THE ISSUE REMAINED UNRESOLVED MUCH LONGER. ON THE ISSUE
OF THE RENEGOTIATION OF THE AGREEMENT, GALLUCCI SAID THAT
HE THOUGHT PAKISTAN COULD AGREE TO THE MEASURES REQUIRED
BY THE IAEA UNDER THE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS, BUT IF IT
PREFERRED TO RENEGOTIATE THE SUBSIDIARY ARRANGEMENTS, IT
SHOULD DO SO. HE ALSO OBSERVED THAT THE CANADIANS
CERTAINLY INTERPRET THE SAFEGUARDS PROVISIONS OF THEIR
AGREEMENT AS SURVIVING, INDEPENDENT OF ANY CONTRACTUAL
OBLIGATION TO CONTINUE FUEL SUPPLY. FINALLY HE SAID THAT
THE US HAD NOT PRESSURED THE AGENCY OVER KANUPP AND THAT

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 IT HAD TAKEN THE SAME POSITION PRIVATELY AS IT HAD PUBLICLY IN THE BOARD, THAT IS, OF SUPPORTING THE AGENCY IN ITS EFFORTS TO OBTAIN THE SAFEGUARDS MEASURES

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S E C R E T SECTION 03 OF 04 ISLAMABAD 10239

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR WALTERS

PASS TO S/AL

IT JUDGED NECESSARY TO ADEQUATELY SAFEGUARD KANUPP.
 BEGIN COMMENT: THE KANUPP DISCUSSION WAS ALLOWED TO RUN
 ON FOR SOME TIME AND APPEARED FOR THE PAKISTANIS A
 WELCOME DIVERSION FROM THE MAIN ISSUE TO WHICH THEY HAD
 BEEN ASKED TO RESPOND. END COMMENT.

13. AT THIS POINT PRESIDENT ZIA BROKE INTO THE CONVERSA-
 TION AND SAID THAT WE HAD HEARD MUNIR'S POINT OF VIEW
 FROM THE TECHNICAL SIDE; NOW HE WOULD GIVE US THE
 GOVERNMENT'S POINT OF VIEW FROM THE POLITICAL SIDE.
 WHETHER RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY PAKISTAN HAD ACCEPTED SAFE-

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GUARDS AND WOULD CONTINUE TO HONOR THIS ASSURANCE AND
EVEN GO ALONG WITH SOME OF THE IAEA'S "UNREASONABLE"
REQUESTS. PAKISTAN WOULD EVEN BE WILLING TO HAVE A
THIRD PARTY LOOK AT DIFFERENCES OF OPINION. GOP WOULD
DO ITS BEST TO MAKE SAFEGUARD AGREEMENTS WORK, BUT BEYOND
A CERTAIN POINT... (ZIA TWICE SAID THIS BUT NEVER MADE
CLEAR BEYOND WHAT POINT OR WHAT IT IS PAKISTAN WOULD
NOT AGREE TO. ALL THAT WAS CLEAR WAS THAT THERE WAS A
LIMIT BEYOND WHICH PAKISTAN WOULD NOT GO.) WHILE IAEA
MIGHT CLAIM IT IS NOT ABLE TO ASSURE THAT KANUPP IS

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PROPERLY SAFEGUARDED, HE COULD ASSURE US IT IS. HE
CONCLUDED BY SAYING, HOWEVER, THAT PAKISTAN WOULD "TRY
TO KEEP THE BALL IN THE IAEA'S COURT."

14. AT THIS POINT GHULAM ISHAQ WHO HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY
SPOKEN SAID HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY US, BY INSISTING
THAT IAEA MUST BE THE JUDGE OF SAFEGUARDS, PUT PAK-US
RELATIONS AT THE MERCY OF AN INTERNATIONAL AGENCY SUBJECT
TO ALL KINDS OF PRESSURES. MR. GALLUCCI REPLIED THAT WE
SAW THINGS DIFFERENTLY. WHILE WE ARE AWARE THAT IAEA
DID NOT ALWAYS PERFORM EFFECTIVELY WE DID BELIEVE IT
ACTED IN GOOD FAITH. GHULAM ISHAQ THEN SAID THAT IF
IAEA CONCERNS HAD OFTEN PROVED TO BE BASED ON LESS
PRECISE INFORMATION THAN THE IAEA THOUGHT, THEN HOW
COULD PAKISTAN BE SURE USG HAD "INCONTROVERTIBLE EVIDENCE"
THAT PERSONS PURPORTING TO REPRESENT GOP WERE ATTEMPTING
FABRICATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS COMPONENTS ABROAD. ZIA
ADDED, "I CAN REALLY TELL YOU THIS SOUNDS QUITE
UNBELIEVABLE". I REPLIED THAT OUR INTELLIGENCE CAME
FROM SEVERAL SOURCES AND FROM SEVERAL COUNTRIES. GHULAM
ISHAQ QUESTIONED WHETHER THIS MADE THE INTELLIGENCE ANY
BETTER. SINCE SUCH A SERIOUS CHARGE WAS BEING MADE
DESPITE PRESIDENT ZIA'S ASSURANCES, THE ACCUSED SURELY HAD
A RIGHT TO SEE SOME OF THE EVIDENCE. IT WAS QUITE
UNBELIEVABLE THAT GOP WOULD DO ANYTHING SO STUPID AS TO
ASK TO RECEIVE BIDS FROM VARIOUS PLACES ABROAD FOR
FABRICATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS COMPONENTS.

15. I REPLIED THAT AS A FORMER DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL
INTELLIGENCE I KNEW THAT WE HAD THE CAPABILITY TO MONITOR
SUCH DEVELOPMENTS. THE PRESIDENT HAD EXAMINED THE
EVIDENCE AND HAD FOUND IT SERIOUS ENOUGH TO ASK ME
IMMEDIATELY TO VISIT PAKISTAN. HE CERTAINLY WOULD NOT

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HAVE DONE SO IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY QUESTION. GHULAM ISHAQ SAID THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO TAKE SERIOUSLY OUR PRESIDENT SENDING A SPECIAL EMISSARY BUT WE SHOULD TAKE SERIOUSLY ASSURANCES OF THEIR PRESIDENT THAT PAKISTAN WOULD DO NOTHING TO EMBARRASS THE US GOVERNMENT. I SAID THAT THESE GOP ASSURANCES WOULD, OF COURSE, BE REPORTED TO CONGRESS. I SAID THAT I WOULD REPORT TODAY'S MEETING TO WASHINGTON AND ASK IF THERE WERE ANY MORE INFORMATION WE COULD PROVIDE.

16. AT THIS POINT ZIA SAID THAT HE HAD GIVEN HIS WORD THAT PAKISTAN WOULD NOT EMBARRASS THE US GOVERNMENT AND THAT PAKISTAN IS NOT "MANUFACTURING A DEVICE OF ANY KIND, PEACEFUL OR OTHERWISE" AND "I WILL REPEAT THESE ASSURANCES TO YOU WHEN I SEE YOU TOMORROW." ZIA REPEATED THAT STEPS TAKEN BY PURPORTED AGENTS OF PAKISTAN COULD NOT HAVE BEEN TAKEN WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE AND CERTAINLY NOT WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF SOMEONE IN THE ROOM; AND NO ONE IN THE ROOM HAD ANY KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT WE SAID WE HAD UNCOVERED (MUNIR KHAN NODDED IN AGREEMENT).

17. ZIA ENDED THE CONVERSATION BY SAYING HE WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THE MATTER AGAIN AFTER HE HAD LOOKED INTO IT AND SUGGESTED THAT I JOIN HIM FOR DINNER THE NEXT EVENING, JULY 5, AT WHICH NO ONE WOULD BE PRESENT BEYOND THOSE WHO WERE PRESENT FOR TODAY'S MEETING. I SAID I ACCEPTED THE INVITATION WITH PLEASURE AND LOOKED FORWARD TO A FURTHER DISCUSSION. THE CONVERSATION WAS CORDIAL THROUGHOUT. ZIA WAS EXTRAORDINARILY COURTEOUS, RELAXED

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S E C R E T SECTION 04 OF 04 ISLAMABAD 10239

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR WALTERS

PASS TO S/AL

AND COMPOSED. THERE WAS NO OUTBURST OF AGGRIEVED
INNOCENCE. HE TOOK THE WHOLE MATTER SOMEWHAT BETTER THAN
I HAD EXPECTED. KING

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